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Women's Health and Physical Activity

Filed under FAMILIES, FLEET AND THE FLEET MARINE FORCE, FORCE HEALTH AND SAFETY   {NO COMMENTS}

Brig. Gen. W. Bryan Gamble, M.D., Deputy Director, TRICARE Management Activity

The goal of National Women's Health and Fitness Day, observed Wednesday, September 26, is to focus attention on the importance of regular physical activity and health awareness for women. TRICARE strongly supports the goals of National Women's Health and Fitness Day, and encourages women in the military community to have healthy habits and take control of their health.

Women comprise nearly half of the 9.7 million TRICARE beneficiaries. TRICARE covers a full range of preventive screenings and tests aimed to help women safeguard their health. A healthy lifestyle involves more than staying up to date on screenings. Physical fitness and a healthy diet help you live healthier and longer, and boost your emotional wellbeing.

Brigadier General W. Bryan Gamble, M.D.

Weight and fitness can be a sensitive subject for anyone. However, beyond matters of appearance that vary for every person, health and weight are closely related. The obesity rate for women in America was 35.8 percent in 2010, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The leading causes of death amongst women in the U.S. are still heart disease, cancer and stroke, all of which have been associated with obesity. The best way to maintain a healthy weight is by getting enough exercise and eating a balanced, healthy diet in appropriate portions.

Here are some steps women can take to improve their physical fitness and lead a healthier lifestyle:

- Get at least two hours and 30 minutes of moderate physical activity, one hour and 15 minutes of vigorous physical activity or a combination of both each week.

- Eat a nutritious diet that emphasizes fruits, vegetables whole grains and fat-free or low-fat milk and milk products.

- Visit a health care professional for regular checkups and recommended preventive screenings.

- Avoid risky behaviors, such as smoking and not wearing a seatbelt.

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- Pay attention to your mental health, including getting enough sleep and managing stress.

The CDC has suggestions for a nutritious, healthy diet while still enjoying the foods you eat, for these suggestion click this here. Coupled with physical exercise, you can get to and maintain a healthy weight, reduce your risk of high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, heart attack, stroke and some kinds of cancer. Maintaining a good level of fitness and healthy weight can also reduce joint pain, the risk of osteoporosis and improve symptoms of depression and anxiety.

TRICARE offers many programs that focus on disease prevention and health promotion. It is important to talk with your doctor about recommended screenings and tests and maintaining a healthy diet and fitness routine. Every person is different, and women who engage with their doctor to personalize their healthcare can improve their outcomes. Visit Tricare Womens Health for more information about TRICARE coverage and programs for women. You can also check out the Women's Health section of Health.mil, to learn more.

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